St. Louis River Toxics TMDL

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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MPCA-Duluth
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Background

In Minnesota, St. Louis River is impaired for:

- Mercury (fish & water)
- PCBs (fish & water)
- Dioxin
- Several recalled/suspended pesticides (DDT, Dieldrin, Toxaphene)

Background

In Wisconsin, St. Louis River (Superior harbor) is impaired for:

- Mercury (fish)
- PCBs (fish)
- Lead
- Dioxin
- DDT
- Dieldrin
- PAHs, and other unspecified metals

Background

On Fond du Lac Indian Reservation, there are a number of waters with mercury impairments, including the St. Louis River.

Background

- Spring 2010, EPA - Region 5 offered funds to help complete a toxics-related TMDL for the St. Louis River.
- Partnership formed: MPCA, Fond du Lac, WDNR, and EPA Region 5.
- EPA hired federal contractor (RTI/URS) to assist partners.
- Partners lack experience with toxics TMDLs; EPA's support critical to helping shape understanding as well as scope the geography and pollutants to be addressed.

Background

- RTI drafted a scoping options report several months ago.
- Partners reviewed and discussed options.
- Partners concluded the geographic scope will cover the entire length of the St. Louis River (headwaters to Lake Superior).
- Also, project will cover all toxic pollutants since they are currently on the list requiring a TMDL.

Background

- Stakeholders have a strong desire to fill data gaps to strengthen and maximize the level of confidence in any products (e.g., modeling) and outcomes that will be a part of completing the TMDL.
- Partners in the process of finalizing a plan to fill data gaps.

2012-2013 Field Seasons: Filling the Data Gaps

- Three pronged approach: flow monitoring, chemistry sampling, biological monitoring
- Two parts to the plan: Upper River and Lower River
- Partners working with contractor to develop monitoring plan for Lower River and Harbor areas, including sediment issues.
- MPCA working with USGS and MnDNR on significantly augmented flow, chemistry, and biological sampling in the Upper River. MnDNR focus: transportation and transformation of mercury in Upper River.

Next Steps.....

1) Implement the field work to fill data gaps.
2) RTI developing the draft model(s) for the project.
3) Start meeting more regularly with stakeholders and interests in the watershed to engage them.
4) Possible future formation of a group to provide technical review, expertise, input, and advice on the scoping of products, draft research/reports, and draft models generated during the project.

General Current Timeline.....

- 2012 & 2013:
  - Continue model development
  - Complete field work for data gaps
  - Compile data and incorporate into draft models
  - Decide whether an additional year of field work is necessary
- 2013 – 2014: Finalize modeling and draft TMDL
- 2014: Develop implementation plan
- 2014 – 2015: Official public comment & finalize TMDL

Questions/Concerns, More Info....

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